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Not top secret, but XU dean works for CIA

By MIKE GRAHAM

It's not top secret or undercover, but the dean of Xavier University's college of business administration, Dr. Thomas J. Hailstones, works for the CIA.

Three times each year the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency flies Hailstones to its McLean, Va., headquarters, where he briefs a group of mid-career agents being assigned or re-assigned overseas.

HE DOESN'T KNOW what they do or where they go, but his job is to explain the U.S. economy to them and its impact on foreign economies. The assignment is right down Hailstones' alley, as he frequently lectures to business and other community organizations.

"In teaching economics," said the 58-year-old educator, "I always have felt it important to tie in what is happening at the time."

A program director for the CIA liked the way Hailstones tied the economy together for a group of civilians at Oak Ridge, Tenn., three years ago and made contact.

"I think it is interesting that they would come to the Midwest and pick someone from a private school to do the job," he said, rather than using the traditional Ivy League resources.

HAILSTONES WILL make another trip to CIA headquarters next month. He is a guest with "security clearance," meaning the guards at the gate are expecting him.

Once inside the complex, however, he is not permitted to go anywhere without an agent at his side—and that includes the men's room.

He spends the better part of a day with the overseas class, whose members also are briefed on international law, politics, culture and relations.

HIS OVERVIEW of the U.S. economy is important to the CIA personnel going abroad, Hailstones thinks, particularly for those who will be rubbing shoulders with foreign business and government officials.

"In 1974 and 1975, things weren't too rosy," he said of the American market. But the lesson he is preparing for his CIA class next month is a happier one.

"Modest but consistent" gains have been made in the country's fourth year of recovery from economic recession, Hailstones said. The Gross National Product, or total retail value of the nation's output of goods and services, is expected to increase 4.5 to 5 percent. Unemployment will average about 6.3 percent, down from last year's 7 percent.

The devaluation of the dollar is of particular concern to CIA personnel, Hailstones said, because they will be consuming foreign goods.

"Theoretically, our goods in America become cheaper to foreigners and theirs cost us more. It should be self-correcting."

He will suggest a policy of patience.

"I do it mostly as a contribution," Hailstones said. The government pays for his travel expenses, and in return, he gives the CIA a view of the American economy from its heartland.